

## A BLESSING

years ago i gave my mother a green  
grasshopper, and this christmas she gave me  
a green grasshopper. the one i had given her  
was made of rubber, while the one  
she gave me was made of a much heavier material,  
which, at the moment, heavenly relaxed on  
christmas beer, i cannot identify.  
so, i am nearing fifty, and my mother and i  
are exchanging grasshoppers. what  
does this say about the nature of things?  
nothing, i'm sure. just as my reading  
dickens at this time in my life says nothing,  
or my father moaning from  
the excruciating pain of shingles  
says nothing. i think of last year's  
poems and i have the suspicion that  
they were written by someone other  
than myself, and that this someone  
had nothing to say. my sweet love haldora  
has nothing to say. this  
is evident. but she of the splendid  
blue icelandic eyes says nothing  
with the magnificent sex  
of her body, and that nothing  
transforms me, and because of this  
they don't recognize me  
in town anymore. this is  
more than nothing. this  
is a blessing.

## MRS. PIERRE

at some time during the christmas holidays the woman who  
owned the jewelry store in town used to pay my parents  
a visit, not so much because she was a dear friend of my  
parents, but because she was very close with my fat  
aunt helen who also ran a business in town, a toy and  
furniture store. so the visit she would make was always  
with my aunt and my uncle. her name was mrs. pierre,  
and that was the name of her store: mrs. pierre's.  
whether that was her true name or not i am unsure, but  
that's what everyone referred to her as. she was



a rather handsome woman: striking figure; golden blonde hair swept up into a dramatic bun; radiant, intoxicating smile which made her eyes glitter and squint like stars successfully peeping through a dawn's mist. there wasn't a time when i wasn't struck dumb by her beauty, and i'd often catch myself staring at her, and not always safely from a distance so that no one would notice me. at the age when i still played with my toy cars on the floor i would religiously do precisely that whenever mrs. pierre came for a visit. i'd position myself so that from where my cars were wheeling and spinning around i'd have a clear view of her very lengthy, shapely legs perhaps crossed in cheerful christmas conversation. truthfully, much of my wretched boyhood was spent spying on women. mrs. pierre might've been my favorite, but certainly there were many others. the thing about mrs. pierre was that she appeared to be so outrageously dazzling. i cannot conjure her up in my mind without seeing her in heels and nylons, finely tapered black dress and with soft pearl oval earrings. she wasn't like any of the other women in the neighborhood where i lived. she was an otherworldly creature who had been sent into my tiny realm in order to tempt me to abandon the notion and confines of boyhood as soon as i was able, and to me there was nothing disagreeable in this. i had looked upon that time, foolishly or not, as being a prison of unfair dimensions. it was forever just a matter of tapping patiently with some hard object, maybe a penknife, on its gray and suffocating walls, searching with the undying stubbornness of youth for that hollow point of vulnerability where i'd be able to break through. in this effort mrs. pierre was a godsend, a wealth of inspiration and my very special cheerleader. may her beauty be remembered during some of the darker moments on the road ahead.

## THE MARCH SUN

the greatest pleasure these winter days  
seems to come from simply standing in  
the shower and allowing hot water  
to rain down over me. and it is best  
to allow the bathroom to get so  
outrageously steamy that it's a real challenge  
just locating the doorknob when  
showering is done and i'm ready to step out